

The Errant Pen

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It was Ralph Waldo Emerson, no less, who wrote:

*The tongue is prone to lose the way,
Not so the pen, for in a letter
We have not better things to say,
But surely say them better.*

Not necessarily so.

Richard Helms, the new chief of the Central Intelligence Agency, used his pen when he should have left it in the inkstand.

A St. Louis paper published his letter, which complimented the paper on an editorial taking issue with Sen.

Fulbright's futile attempt to widen the list of Senators who tune in on CIA operations.

Bristling reaction among some Senators took up three pages of fine print in the Congressional Record. Mr. Helms was summoned to explain.

"It was a mistake," he said. "I realize it was a mistake. I regret it and have apologized."

Proving, we suppose, that sticking one's foot in one's mouth is no sillier than jabbing a pen into a senatorial hide.